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Omnia Comesta à Bello:

OR, AN

ANSWER

OUT OF THE

WEST,

TO A

QUESTION

OUT OF THE

NORTH.

WHEREIN

The Earth is opened, and the Napkin found, in which the Trading-Talent of the Nation hath been tyed up, and lain hid for some Years last past; for want of which, all Persons in *England*, from the Tenant to the Landlord, from the Weaver to the Merchant, have languished of a deep Consumption.

♣ Sir Fr. Bacon Ess. of *Sedition* and *Troubles*, Chap. 15. Pag. 85. *Above all things, good policy is to be used, that the Treasure and Moneys in a State be not gathered into few hands, for otherwise a State may have a great Stock, and yet starve: and Money is like Muck, not good except it be spread.*

Idem, pag. 172. *The Blessings of* Judah *and* Issachar *will never meet, that the same people or Nation should be both the Lyons Whelp, and the Ass between two Burdens; neither will it be, That a people over-laid with Taxes should ever become Martial and Valiant.*

Hist. of Bel and the Dragon, Vers. 8. *So the King was wrath, and called for his Priests, and said unto them, If ye tell me not who it is that hath devoured these expences, ye shall die.* Vers. 20, 21. *And the King said, I see the footsteps of Men, Women and Children; and the King was angry, and took the Priests with their Wives and Children, who shewed him the Privy-Door where they came in, and consumed such things as were upon the Table.*

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SIR,

I Must beg your pardon that I have so long tired your expectations, and which is worse, have altogether failed them, except the few Scraps you find in this Reply will stop the mouth of your first *Query*; for as to the four last, I have neither Time nor Capacity to send any thing that may claim the Title of a Resolve.

Yet that others more able may contribute towards an Answer to your so Seasonable and Rational Demands, and that you may not think I have forgot them, I shall here insert them in order as you proposed.

Query 1. *Whether the great Cause of Impoverishing the Nation, Ruin of Trade, and general consumption of Comfort, Settlement and Contents, which hath brought the Land to a meer Anatomy, is not caused by the Pomp, Pride, Luxury, Exaction and Oppressions of the* Prelates?

Query 2. *Whether, Since all other Reformed Churches in* Europe, *did upon the first Reformation and departure from Popery, cast out all Diocesan Bishops, Name and Thing, Root and Branch, as an Office altogether Popish, together with all their Hierarchical appurtenances, and do this day esteem them no otherwise; why did not, or doth not* England *also do the like?*

Query 3. *Whether the several Reformed Churches beyond the Seas, did not take into the hands of their Supreme Governours all the Lordly Revenues of the Prelates, and reserve them for publick use, or dispose part of them to such persons as well deserved of them, in the faithful service of their Country; and if so, whether it might not be of good and great concern to this Kingdom, for the Lordships and Baronies belonging to so many useless persons, to be disposed of by publick Authority, for publick Good; and more especially for the honourable maintenance of those worthy Persons and their Posterity, who have lost their Blood and Estates in the Kings service, and at present lye under great discouragements, and bleeding-wounds in their Temporals, for want of a suitable Recompence; whilst these, (who put them all together,) never did half the service, and if occasion should require, never can, as one of these Heroick Gentlemen, yet as Ecclesiasticks are rewarded with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 thousand pounds* per annum, *a man?*

Query 4. *whether in those Kingdoms and States where Prelacy is extirpated, and a Presbytery only retained, there be not as Godly, Able, Orthodox Preachers, and as constant Preaching as in this Kingdom; and more especially, whether their Subjects are not as cordially Obedient, and as free from any Rebellion, as in these places, where Bishops are retained? and also, whether their Councils are not free from molestation, their Nobility and Gentry free from Affronts, and the Commonalty free from Oppression, where the Prelates are disabled from sitting in Council, from Peerking above the Nobles, and from imposing upon the Commons?*

Query 5. *whether the present State of Affairs in our Neighbour-Nations, especially of* France *who have a Prodigious Victorious Army, a Fleet still lying at* Rochel, *a fit place from whence to invade us; and the great industry of the* Pope *imployed to divert their Arms from* Spain, *and turning them upon some other design; whether, I say, it be not reasonable to consider of some way to engage all hearts and hands in this Nation unanimously to oppose all Invasions, rather than to multiply Discouragements upon the Body of the people by Episcopal Oppressions?*

In Answer to your first, I am by many Reasons induced to conclude in the Affirmative, *That the cause of Impoverishing the Nation, Ruin of Trade, and general consumption of Comfort, Settlement and Contents, is caused by the Pomp, Pride, Luxury Exaction and Oppression of the Prelates.*

It is a true Maxime of the Learned *Verulam*, *A smaller number that spend more, and gain less, do wear out an Estate sooner, than a greater number that live lower, and gather more: So it is with an over-grown Clergy, for they bring nothing to the Stock.*

That the Trading-Stock of the Nation is devoured in this Prelatical Gulph, I shall demonstrate, by laying open to the view the black back-door and cinque that hath drained the Trading-Purse dry.

First. The Revenues, Pomp and State of the Prelates.

There are two Provincial Archbishops, *Canterbury* and *York*; with their Princely Retinue, Domestick Chaplains, Officers for Temporal Tithes, their Spiritual Officers, Viear-General, Guardian of the Spiritualities, Dean of the Arches, with all their under-Officers and Attendants.

Secondly; His Courts.

Court of Faculties, Court of Audience, Prerogative-Court, Delegates.

There are four and twenty Bishops Diocesan, with their Trains, Domestick-Servants, Chaplains, Officers and Courts.

To these belong 26 Chancellors, and their Attendants, 24 Registers with their Clerks, 24 Gentlemen Apparators, 120 Inferiour Apparators, 48 Proctors.

There are under these Bishops, 60 Arch-Deacons, and these have 60 Courts, to which belong Commissaries, Officials, Surrogates, 60 Registers, 120 Proctors, 200 Apparators.

So that the Number belonging to Archbishops, Bishops, Arch-Deacons, and their Trade, are judged to be no less then *Ten thousand Persons*; which will require for their maintenance, *Two hundred thousand pounds per annum*, reckoning them at *twenty pounds* a man; whereas some of them have *one hundred pounds*, some *two hundred pounds*, some *four hundred pounds*, squeezed out of the poor people. As for their standing Rents, they are well known.

Their Lordly Palaces, sumptuous Houses, Ecclesiastical Dignities, Baronies, *&c. viis & modis*, such is their Income, that it amounts at least to *four hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year*.

They have many other ways to enrich themselves, and impoverish the Nation; As

First, By Ordaining Deacons and Ministers four times a year for Money, by which they put yearly hundreds of Pounds,

Secondly, By Instituting and Inducting Parsons and Vicars to Benefices when they fall; for every such Institution and Induction they have *three pounds* at least. And in *England* there are 9285 *Parishes*; so that at the rate of one in a *Parish*, it amounts to *twenty seven thousand eight hundred fifty five pounds*.

Thirdly, By making Rural Deans yearly, and for the Oath taking, they pay *eight shillings and six pence*.

Fourthly, By granting Licenses for Beneficed Ministers to preach in their own Cures; though they be Ordained before, and strictly commanded to Preach, yet they must not do it without License, and this License costs them *ten shillings*, so that in 9285 *Parishes*, comes to *four thousand six hundred forty two pounds ten shillings*.

Fifthly, By granting, 1. Licenses to Curates to Preach.
2. Licenses for Schoolmasters to teach School.
3. Licenses for Parish Clarks.
4. Licenses for Physicians to practise Physick.
5. Licenses to Midwives to do their Office.
6. Licenses to Marry, *which thing of it self ariseth to a vast Revenue.*

For Absolving Excommunicated persons.

For putting men to clear themselves by Oath, with their Compurgators.

For

For Commutation of Penance, for so the Rich come off with a round sum of Money, but the poor doing their Penance in kind, must stand Excommunicated until they have paid their Fees.

Sixthly, By Probates of Wills, and granting Letters of Administration, *which brings in constantly great sums of Money.*

Seventhly, By framing New Articles, and foreing Church-Wardens to present upon Oath, whereby many Innocent persons are brought into their Courts, and squeezed both in Conscience and Purse; and so is the Church-Warden also, if he do not take the Oath prepared for him.

By their Visitations for Money.

First, Church-Wardens of every Parish in *England* and Chappel are called, who receive a Book of Articles to present by; if any are wanting, they are warned to appear at their Courts with Costs. These Church-Wardens pay for their Book of Articles every year, (although the very same) as also for writing their Presentments by a Clerk (which they themselves could do, but are not permitted) *two shillings four pence*; which in 9285 *Parishes* cometh to *one thousand fifty eight pounds odd money* yearly.

Secondly, Ministers that are Licensed pay *one shilling eight pence*, or thereabouts, for shewing their License to Preach, to the Register, at every Bishops Visitation, though seen and allowed before; after that, *four shillings* for Procuration to the Bishop; and to the Gentleman Apparator *eight pence*, though most pay *twelve pence*.

I shall omit the poor Curates Suit and Service at this Court, only let you know, That when any Archbishop comes newly to *York*, all the Parsons and Vicars in his Jurisdiction, though never so poor, and their charge never so great, give him a tenth of their Livings for a Benevolence, to help the poor Bishop to settle himself in *five or six thousand pounds a year*; and if any, yea, the meanest Vicar, whose poor Children want Bread; do through poverty omit the payment, this Reverend Father doth pitifully whip him to the very Bones, in his mercilesse Spiritual Court.

By Arch-Deacons Visitations.

These are twice a year. At *Easter*-Visitation the Ministers pay their *Pascal Rents*, or *Synodals*, which sums are like to all; some *5 s.* some less.

At *Michaelmas* they pay *Procurations*; some *seven shillings*, some *ten shillings*, some less. But it is judged that Ministers pay yearly at Visitations, *five thousand pounds* and upwards.

By the vast Charges in Collegiat-Churches.

There are twenty six great Deans with their Attendants and Servants. 544. Canons Residents and Prebendaries, with a numerous train of Vicars, Peti-Canons, Singing-men and Boys, Choristers, Organists, Gospellers, Epistelers, Virgers.

Now this Jovial Crew have belonging to them, about *four thousand pounds yearly*, in Lands, Rents, Leases, and other Revenues and Profits thereunto belonging.

The excessive Expences that many thousands of the Trading People of the Nation are put unto, by the Rigorous and Tyrannical proceedings of the Bishops, in Excommunicating persons, for three pence, six pence, and very trivial things.

A Catalogue may shortly be presented to you of the many Families already undone by them; wherein it will be made manifest, That more Families have been Ruined, more Persons Imprisoned, more Money spent by the Cruelty of the Prelates proceedings, than by all Law-Suits in all Courts of Judicature, all Payments and Taxes whatsoever, except upon the late extraordinary occasion.

The

The vast sums of Money that the Bishops, Deans, &c. have treasured up, extorting it from the Subjects for Fines.

You know that for twenty years sometime by-past, their Revenues were alienated, and sold for great sums of Money to the Natives of *England*. Those who bought them had greatly improved them, (who being some thousands of Families,) are undone by being turned out without any Consideration. The Bishops enter at a time when most of the Old Leases were expired, they proclaim their Markets, he that gives most, Friend or Foe, he shall be taken Tenant; they screw up the value to the height, and hereby they have drained out of the peoples Purses such sums of Money, that amounts to so monstrous a Mass, that scarce any Princes Treasure in *Europe* is able to ballance it; in the mean time, the Money (that before ran currant in Trading,) is Damned up in their Coffers.

Hereby the Money that should carry on Trade, is Ingrossed into the hands of a few Rusty Ecclesiasticks, who neither serve our Lords Jesus Christ, nor their Countrey, but their own Bellies; and hoard up the Riches, that should be as the Blood in the *Vena porta*, to be distributed into every Vein and part of the Body; but by being choaked up in their *Corban*, brings the whole Nation into *Consumption*.

And it's very considerable, That in all other Trades, men have something for their Money: The Farmers hath good Land for their Money from the Gentleman; the Clothier hath good Wool from the Farmer for his Money, the Merchant hath good Cloth from the Clothier for his Money; and thus it goes round to every one's benefit. But pray, what have we from the Bishops for our Money? The Answer will be readily made by the major part of the Land.

First, We have all our Able, Godly, Orthodox Ministers turned out, ruined and beggar'd, and no manner of Supply provided for the maintenance of them and their Families; and in their rooms, (in many places,) a company of Debauched, Illiterate, Superstitious, Profane Priests; which Blind-guides, must needs lead them that follow them to Hell.

Secondly, We have gotten most of the Church-Wardens Perjured, that do Swear to present according to their Visitation-Articles, and most of them undone that do not Swear, although the Imposing of such an Oath is a breach of the fundamental Laws of the Land. Those Church-Wardens that are not perjured, but pursue the Oath in persecuting their Neighbours, are plunged into such horrid guilt, that without serious Repentance they must perish eternally; for they persecute the Godly for godliness sake, the Righteous for righteousness sake, as will appear in these following Instances.

I. If a Minister never so godly and able, yea, though Ordained, Preach without a License from the Bishop, the Church-Warden is bound to present him, and bring him into trouble: if he Preach in a Cloak, and not in a Garment Canonical, he is bound to do the like.

II. If any person go to hear a Sermon from his own Parish Church, though there be no Preaching Minister there, nor no Sermon at all; and though he be bound by his Vow in Baptism to hear Sermons, this man is to be presented.

III. If a poor man that hath not Bread for his Family, but what he earneth by his daily labour, if he work upon a Holy-day, appointed by *Romish* Institution, he is to be presented.

IV. If any person coming to Church to their service, do not stand up at the Creed, do not bow at the Name of Jesus, do not keep off his Hat all the while, he must be presented.

Now there are in all, *threescore and fourteen thousand Church-wardens and Sides-men in England every year*, and what a dreadful thing is it to have all these yearly, either *Perjured*, *Persecutors*, or *Persecuted*?

Thirdly, We have gotten most of the Sober Trading part of the Nation Discouraged by Citations, Excommunications, Writs to take them Excommunicated, Imprisonments upon Ecclesiastical accounts; by this means, thousands of Families are already ruined, and

and many hundreds are ready to leave the Land, and remove into some other Country, where they may have Liberty of Conscience, and Freedom from these devouring Harpies.

Fourthly, We have got instead of the Gospel in the Power and Purity of it, a Service collected out of the *Romish* Books, the Mass, Breviary, &c. which Service of ours, King *James* called *an ill sung Mass*; We have got Surplices, Copes, Tippets, Cringings, &c. out of the *Romish Rituals*; insomuch that the Papists themselves call it *An Apish imitation of the Mass*.

Fifthly, We have gotten a swarm of Ecclesiastical Officers, which the Scriptures never knew, nor Reformed Churches ever owned.

Sixthly, We have got a sort of proud Prelates, of mean Extract, not of the highest rank for Godliness, Learning and Labour in the Word, nor the greatest Champions for the Protestant Religion; witness their Silence at such a time when Popery hath so travelled to bring forth; so many Popish Books Printed and Published in *England*, in affront and contempt of the Reformed Religion, yet few of our Bishops have stood up in opposition to their design, nor Printed any Caution against Popery, or Answer to the Popish pernicious Pamphlets. However very late they are, affronting our Nobility, trampling upon our Gentry, grinding to powder all that put not into their Mouths, or offer not at their Shrine; insomuch that a Gentleman of Quality, a person of 3000*l. per an.* speaking to one of the Prelates (lately dead) boldly but with due respect: the Prelate, in a fume, answered, *What, Sir, do you think that it is fit for every Jack-Gentleman to speak thus to a Bishop?* deriding the Gentry of our Land, as not worthy to speak to a peevish Prelate. Surely a Gentleman of 500*l. per annum* would have fallen under censure for presuming to speak to his Postilion.

We have gotten all manner of misery to Soul and Body, Plague, Fire, Sword, Universal Beggary, and without seasonable Mercy, the total Ruin of the whole Kingdom.

But I know you will question, whether our Miseries do arise from the Cause Assigned?

To this I Answer, The manifold provoking sins of the Land, as Adultery, Blasphemy, Swearing, Idolatry, Perjury, and contempt of God and Godliness, do pull hard with Heaven to bring down desolating Judgments. But that the nearest cause of our impoverishment ariseth from the particulars forementioned, will appear, if you weigh the Premises before inferred, and give them leave to speak their own conclusion: if Perjury causeth a Land to mourn, if Oppression and rigid Persecution upon the Trading-part of a Land begets discontent and deserting of Trade: if rigorous exacting, and sordid hoarding up the Money that should run current in Trade, and that by such who contribute nothing to the publick Weal, be the bane of Traffick and the famishment of the poor Handicrafts-man, then we may lay our Calamities at the Bishops doors.

I shall call in some credible Witnesses, Divines and Martyrs to confirm this Truth, and so leave it with you. Bishop *Jewel* on *Hag.* 1. records out of *Johannes Parisiensis*, and others, *That when* Constantine *the Great advanced Bishops, and endowed the Church with Lands and Temporal Possessions, there was a voice of Angels heard in the Air, saying*, Hodie venenum insunditum in Ecclesiam, *This day Poyson is poured into the Church.*

Bernard writes, *Since Prelates increased in worldly pomp, chusing the first places in the Church, they have been the chiefest in persecuting Jesus Christ; and have ever shewed themselves not Teachers, but Deceivers; not Pastors, but Impostors; Prelates, but Pilates: succeeding not* Peter *in teaching, but* Romulus *in murthering.*

Lord *Cobham*, that faithful Martyr, saith to the Bishops, *No ground have ye in all the Scriptures, so Lordly to take it upon you, but in* Annas *and* Caiaphas, *who sate in Judgment upon Christ and his Apostles: of them only have you taken it to judge Christs Members as ye do.*

Mr. Tindal, that godly and learned Martyr writeth, *Wo to the Realm where the Prelates are of the Council! as profitable are the Prelacy to the Realm with their Counsel, as wolves to the*

the Sheep, or Foxes to the Geese: for there is no mischief or disorder, whether it be in Temporal Regiment or Spiritual, whereof they are not the chief causes, and even the very fountain and spring: so that it is impossible to preach against any mischief, except thou begin at them; or to set up any Reformation in the World, except they are first reformed. They are as obdurate as Pharaoh; *and therefore persecute they Gods Word, and the Preachers thereof; they stir up mischief in the World, setting Princes to War; they get into the consciences of Kings, and perswade them what they list, neither can any King have rest for them; they pretend they are for God and the Church, but their secret intent is to bring all under their power; and when they are once set high, then are they Tyrants above all Tyrants.*

Mr. John Frith, that worthy Martyr, in his Answer to *Mr. More's* Preface; *Since Sylvester received such Possessions, hath the Canker so crept into the Church, that it hath almost left never a sound Member; then instead of Gods word they preached their own Commandments, and made Laws to have all under them, and even as in the rooms of* Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Caleb, *and other such faithful Leaders, came* Herod, Annas, Caiaphas, Pilate, *and* Judas, *which put Christ to death. So instead of Christ,* Peter, Paul, James, John, *and the faithful Followers of Christ, we have Popes, Cardinals, Archbishops, and proud Prelates, with their Proctors, and malicious Ministers of their Master the Devil, whose end shall be according to their works.*

Dr. *Barnes* in his Supplication to *Henry* the Eighth, *Now it is so far come, that whosoever he be, high or low, rich or poor, wise or foolish, that speaketh against the Prelates, and their vicious living, he is either made a Traytor to your Grace, or an Heretick: Enemy or Schismatick against holy Church; as though the Prelates were Kings or Gods; and if any man out of Gods Law and right Conscience, speak against their damnable Tyranny, little will they stick to make him an Heretick; and if that will not help to colour and maintain their oppression, then add they Treason, Sedition, Rebellion, and contempt of your Grace, though it be never so true a Subject.*

I shall conclude with a passage of learned Mr. *Tindal* in his *Obedience to a Christian Magistrate,* P. 114, 128, 146. *As thou canst heal no Disease except thou begin at the Root, even so canst thou preach against no mischief except thou begin at the Bishops; whether* Judas *was a Priest or no, I care not, but of this I am sure, That he now is not only Priest, but also a Bishop, Cardinal, and Pope. Bishops that preach not, or that preach ought save Gods word, are none of Christs, nor his anointing; but servants of the Beast, whose mark they bear, whose word they preach, whose law they maintain, clean against Gods law; Bishops they are that can only minister the Temporal sword, their Office, the preaching of Gods word, laid aside; which they will neither do themselves, nor suffer any man else to do, but play with the Temporal sword (which they have gotten out of the hands of all Princes) them that would. The preaching of Gods word is hateful to them; why? for it is impossible to preach Christ, except thou preach against Antichrist; that is to say, them who with their false Doctrine, and violence of Sword, enforce to quench the true Doctrine of Christ. Our Prelates ought to be our servants, as the Apostles were, to teach us Christs Doctrine, and not Lords over us, to oppress us with their own Doctrines and Inventions.*

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